



Breckland Local Plan Update Local Development Scheme

March 2025

1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 The government requires local planning authorities to prepare a Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS is a five-year project plan, and this version covers the period 2025-2030. The purpose of an LDS includes setting out the timetable for the delivery of Council produced planning policy documents. These are often referred to as Development Plan Documents or Local Plans. During the period 2025-2027, the Council intends to complete a full update of the Breckland Local Plan (2019 and updated in 2023). The review will affect the whole of Breckland District.
- 1.2 This LDS contains a timetable for the delivery of the update to inform local people and stakeholders of the key milestones in its production.
- 1.3 This LDS replaces the November 2023 version.

2. The Existing Development Plan

- 2.1 Development Plans are an important part of the English planning system and are needed to guide the local decision-making process for land uses and development proposals.
- 2.2 At February 2025 the Development Plan for Breckland comprised:

Breckland Local Plan and associated Policies Map (September 2023)

- 2.3 Following the completion of the single policy update of the Breckland Local Plan (2019), Breckland District Council adopted the Breckland Local Plan on September 21st 2023, and has commenced a full update of the Plan. The current Local Plan sets out the framework for development within the District until 2036. It includes a spatial vision, objectives, and key policies. It also includes an associated 'Policies Map' that sets out the geographical extent of key designations and site-specific proposals set out in the Local Plan.

Further information on the Local Plan can be found at the following link:

<https://www.breckland.gov.uk/adoption>

- ***Core Strategy and Development Control Policies (2009) (Saved policies)***
- ***Thetford Area Action Plan (2012) (Saved policies)***

Further information on these plans can be found at the following link:

<https://www.breckland.gov.uk/previous-local-plan>

- 2.4 The Localism Act (2011) provides the opportunity for communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans to guide further development that they may wish to see in their communities. Neighbourhood Plans, once adopted, form part of the Development Plan for the area and are used in the determination of Planning Applications. Neighbourhood Plans are prepared by Town and Parish Councils to address key local priorities. Their key milestones are specific to each document. The regulations do not require neighbourhood plans to be included within the LDS.
- 2.5 Neighbourhood Development Plans are prepared by Town and Parish Councils and the plans are subject to consultation, independent examination, and referendum. The plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted local plan and should have regard to any emerging Local Plan.
- 2.6 A neighbourhood area must be designated for a Neighbourhood Development Plan to be produced. In total, 13 Parish Councils (1 joint with 3 parishes) have designated Neighbourhood Areas. To date, 10 Neighbourhood Plans have been made and the remaining 7 are at various stages of preparation. The Made plans are as follows:
- Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2036 (January 2018)
 - Croxton, Brettenham and Kilverstone Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2036 (January 2019)
 - Mattishall Neighbourhood Plan 2017 – 2036 (November 2017)
 - Swaffham Neighbourhood Plan 2016 - 2036 (May 2019)
 - Swanton Morley Neighbourhood Plan 2016 - 2036 (December 2019)
 - Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan 2016 – 2036 (June 2017)
 - Saham Toney Neighbourhood Plan 2019 - 2036 (November 2021)
 - New Buckenham Neighbourhood Plan 2017 -2036 (July 2022)
 - Watton Neighbourhood Plan (April 2024)
 - Necton Neighbourhood Plan (November 2024)

Further information on these neighbourhood plans and those currently being prepared can be found at the following link:

[Neighbourhood Planning - Breckland Council](#)

Norfolk Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-2030 (July 2016)

- 2.7 The adopted Norfolk Minerals and Waste Development Framework contains the following minerals and waste planning policy documents and a policies map. These documents contain policies for use in making decisions on planning applications for mineral extraction and associated development and waste management facilities, and in the selection of specific site allocations in Norfolk:
- Core Strategy and Minerals and Waste Development Management Policies Development Plan Document 2010-2026 (adopted September 2011)
 - Minerals Site Specific Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) (adopted October 2013, amendments adopted December 2017)
 - Waste Site Specific Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) (adopted October 2013)
 - Revised PDF policies map (PDF, 17 MB) and the revised interactive policies map which includes the Site Specific Allocations and an interactive map of

Mineral Safeguarding Areas.

- Single Issue Silica Sand Review of the Minerals Site Specific Allocations DPD (adopted December 2017).

- 2.8 The County Council is preparing a Norfolk Minerals and Waste Local Plan Review, to consolidate the three adopted plans into one Local Plan, ensure that the policies within them remain up-to-date and to extend the plan period to the end of 2038.

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/mineralsandwastelocalplanreview>

Other Planning Documents

- 2.9 In addition to the above components of the Development Plan, there are other key planning documents that the Council can produce. These include:

- Supplementary Planning Documents – these set out further information, interpretation or clarification regarding existing planning policies and are produced and adopted by the Council in accordance with government requirements.
- Swaffham Conservation Area Appraisal.
- Thetford Conservation Area Appraisal.
- Planning policy guidance – these set out further information, interpretation or clarification regarding existing planning policies but have not been produced to meet government Supplementary Planning Document requirements
- Statement of Community Involvement – a procedural document that sets out the methods for consultation and engagement with the public and stakeholders. This includes consultation and engagement during the production of Local Plans, the production of Neighbourhood Development Plans, and the Development Management process.
- Authority Monitoring Reports – a procedural document, produced on an annual basis that monitors performance against the Local Plan.

- 2.10 In Breckland, there is an adopted supplementary planning document: Breckland Landscape and Character Assessment (2022) and Breckland Design Guide

https://www.breckland.gov.uk/media/20182/Breckland-Landscape-and-Settlement-Character-Assessment/pdf/5833_4.4_Breckland_Landscape_and_Settlement_Character_Assessment_2023-10-06_HR_-_optimized_v4.pdf?m=1719499845077

https://www.breckland.gov.uk/media/21514/Adopted-Interactive-Breckland-Design-Guide/pdf/5861_Breckland_Design_Guide_Adopted_Interactive.pdf?m=1713798795327

- 2.11 The Council also prepares a Statement of Community Involvement detailing how people will be involved in the planning system.

3 Overview of Local Development Documents to be produced

Full Update (2024 – 2041)

3.1 The Plan will cover the period April 2024 – March 2042. The full update must follow these statutory stages under the current process

- The first stage of plan-making (Regulation 18 Notification) requires the notification to interested parties of the proposed subjects to be included in the Local Plan, and to invite comments.
- Identification and consultation on the scope of the Plan by identifying issues and opportunities, and translating these into aims, objectives, and an overall vision for the District and each of the larger settlements.
- Appraisal of a range of policy and site options and publication and consultation on preferred choices for inclusion in the First Draft Local Plan consultation document. This includes all alternative options considered to enable people to see why a particular approach has been chosen.
- Regulation 18 also includes preparation and consultation on Plan including Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment, and Equality Impact Assessment work.
- Regulation 19 is where the proposed policies and site allocations are published in a Final Draft Local Plan document.
- Following consultation, the Final Draft Local Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination.
- Regulations 22-26 of the Local Planning Regulations involve the submission of the Draft Local Plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination, the examination hearings and subsequent consultation on any required changes to the Plan before it can be adopted for use - if it is found to be 'sound' by the Inspector.

3.2 Breckland Council is preparing a full update of the 2019 Local Plan. Work on the Plan began in 2022 and the Council has undertaken the following stages of preparation¹:

Call for Sites

3.3 Between April and December 2022 the council undertook a Call for Sites consultation as part of the update on the Local Plan. This was a way for landowners, developers, individuals, parish and town councils and other interested parties to suggest sites for development or for protection as Local Green Space. All sites that are eventually allocated within the Plan must be suitable, available and deliverable. This means, among other factors, that the landowner is open to developing it within the required timescales. As such, a Call for Sites is an important part of finding out what land may be available.

Issues and Options

3.4 The Issues and Options consultation was an important part of the Local Plan process. This was the first stage of public consultation, where the community was asked how they would like to tackle a range of planning issues and proposed options

¹ <https://www.breckland.gov.uk/article/19942/Local-Plan-Full-Update-2024>

for the future development of the District. The consultation did not identify potential development sites or draft policy working. The Issues and Options consultation ran from March 10 to May 19 2023.

Regulation 18 Consultation (Development Options)

- 3.5 A 6-week period of public consultation on the Regulation 18 Local Plan was undertaken on the emerging development strategy between 8th January 2024 and 19th February 2024.

Regulation 18 Consultation (Preferred Options Draft Plan)

- 3.6 The Council has completed a public consultation on the Draft Plan. This ended on 15th July 2024. This stage of the local plan (known as Regulation 18) sets out the Council's draft policies and growth strategy and is an important stage in the plan-making process. It provides an early opportunity for our communities, businesses, landowners, developers, partners and stakeholders to 'have a say' and comment on the draft Local Plan before it is considered further.
- 3.7 On 30th July 2024 the Labour Government published a consultation on proposed revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The consultation ended in September 2024. In December 2024 the Government published the revised NPPF which included mandatory housing targets.
- 3.8 The key aspects of this for Breckland are:
- The mandatory requirement to deliver 903 dwellings per annum (and increase of 44%).
 - The requirement to produce a timetable for the update of the Local Plan within 12 weeks.
 - Should a local authority continue to draft a Local Plan under the existing regulations, to submit for examination by December 2026.
- 3.9 It is important to note that all the work already undertaken on the review of the Plan, including the Regulation 18 Plan and responses to the public consultation as well as the earlier call for sites and consultation on the Issues and Options and Development Options will be used when considering the future preparation of the Local Plan.

4 Timetable and Resources

- 4.1 The timetable for full update needs careful consideration. It is critical that the Council sets a timetable that is supported by both an appropriate and committed financial and staff resource to minimise risks to delivery, critical factors in agreeing timetables are as follows:
- Available financial resources.
 - Available staffing resources.
- 4.2 It is critical that the Council sets a timetable that reflects possible changes to the planning system and does not commit to potentially abortive and costly work too early in the preparation process or seek to progress the update too quickly. This needs to be balanced with the current expectation in the NPPF that requires Plans to be reviewed every 5 years.

- 4.3 The production of the new Local Plan will follow full statutory processes, including the preparation of a Sustainability Appraisal, public participation, and other regulatory requirements. The Local Plan will be subject to Examination by an independent Inspector.
- 4.4 The documents that Breckland Council proposes to prepare are as follows:
- (1) The new Local Plan
 - (2) Policies Maps
 - (3) Statement of Community Involvement, and
 - (4) 5 Year Housing Land Statement in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF.
- 4.5 Appendix 1 sets out the timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan Updates.

Availability of the LDS

- 4.6 The Council is required by regulations to make the LDS available to the public. Copies are available for inspection at the Council's offices in Dereham. The LDS is also available to view on the Planning Policy pages of the Council's website [www.breckland.gov.uk].

Appendix 1: Timetable

Stage Completed	
To be completed	

Coverage: District Wide		Full Update
Governance: Executive Team Cabinet / Full Council		
A	Commencement of Preparation	Q3 2021
B	Scoping of the Review	Q3 2021
C	Call for Sites	April – December 2022
D	Regulation 18 Issues and Options Preparation	October 2022 - February 2023
E	Regulation 18 Issues and Options consultation	March – May 2023
F	Regulation 18 (Development Options) (Preparation	June 2023 – December 2023
G	Regulation 18 Consultation (Development Options)	January – February 2024
H	Regulation 18 Consultation (Preferred Options Draft Plan) (Preparation)	February – April 2024
I	Regulation 18 Consultation (Preferred Options Draft Plan) (Public Consultation)	May – July 2024
J	Prepare revised local development scheme (Cabinet approval)	March 2025
	<i>Time Taken</i>	3 months
K	Update, consult and approval of Statement of Community Involvement if required.	July 2025
	<i>Time Taken</i>	3 months
L	Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and preparation (including consultation) (Prepared externally)	Q1 2022 -Q3 2026 Examination date
	<i>Time Taken</i>	Throughout process
M	Collation of evidence base including: HEDNA Update Retail and Leisure Study Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategy Power Study Habitats Regulation Assessment Integrated Assessment Local Nature Reserve Study Water Cycle Study Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Infrastructure Delivery Plan	Q2 2025 Q2 2025 Q2 2025 Q2 2025 and updated as allocations made Q1 2025 and updated as allocations made Q2 2025 and updated as allocations made Q2 2025 Q1 2025 Q2 2025 Q2 2025 and updated as allocations made Q1 2025 and updated as Plan progresses

	Whole Plan Viability Assessment Green Infrastructure Strategy Strategic Development Options work	Q2 2025 and updated as plan progresses Q2 2025 Q4 2025
	<i>Time Taken</i>	Throughout process
N	Revised Regulation 18 (Preferred Options Draft Plan) (Preparation and approval (Executive Group and Cabinet. Includes agreement of consultation Strategy)	January 2025 – October 2025
	<i>Time Taken</i>	10 months
O	Revised Regulation 18 Consultation (Preferred Options Draft Plan) (Public Consultation and assessment of responses)	October 2025 – December 2025
	<i>Time Taken</i>	6 week statutory consultation period
P	Regulation 19: Pre-Submission Draft: Preparation and approval (Executive Group and Cabinet)	January 2026 – June 2026
	<i>Time Taken</i>	5 months
Q	Regulation 19 Pre- Submission Draft: Consultation and assessment of responses)	July 2026 – September 2026
	<i>Time Taken</i>	6 week statutory consultation period
R	Regulation 22: Approval of Submission Draft Preparation and approval (Executive Group and Cabinet)	November 2026
	<i>Time Taken</i>	2 months
S	Regulation 22: Submission for examination	December 2026
	<i>Time Taken</i>	1 month
T	Examination / Modifications (Regulations 23, 24)	2027 (TBA with PINS)
U	Adoption (Regulation 26 Full Council	2027 TBC